(2.) We now inquire whether the conscience *approves of any one state of the mind ivhen the same is truly represented ?* In making this inquiry, it will be needful to keep in view some of the laws of the operations of conscience noticed in a preceding section, and also the influence which the will exercises upon the representation made to the moral faculty of any given action. We must remember that the conscience pronounces its verdict of approval or disapproval, not upon the outward act, but upon the inward state of the agent, and that it judges of this state according to the representation given to it. Pains must he taken., then, in submitting any action to the decision of the conscience, to submit not a mere bodily act but a mental state of the agent, and to submit the actual mental state. If the real state of the agent's soul is not laid before the conscience, it may give far too favourable a decision. The difficulty of this whole investigation lies in determining the precise condition of the soul at any given time. In by far the greater number of our actions possessed of moral characteristics, the motives, direct and indirect, immediate and ultimate, are very numerous ; and when there have been so many determining feelings, it is extremely difficult to -discover the predominating one; not unfrequently it contrives to lie altogether concealed in the complicated folds of the human breast.

But here, we shall suppose, is an individual resolved to ascertain, in the light of his conscience, his precise moral state, being aware meanwhile of the deceitfulness of his heart. This man will soon find, that the more closely he investigates his heart and conduct, it is the more difficult to arrive at felt certainty. The difficulty which he experiences arises, not so much from a want of clearness in the decisions of the conscience when the case is stated, as in determining what is the case—that is, the precise motive by which he is swayed, and the actual state

of his mind at any given instant. Were he quite sure that he had been swayed by pure and benevolent motives at the time referred to, he knows what the decision of the moral faculty would be; but the deeper the investigation, and the greater the spirit of candour by which he is actuated, it is seen to be the more difficult to determine the exact influence under which he acted. This inquirer, in very proportion to his honesty, is the more puzzled and distressed; and he may be tempted at last, as he feels himself beset by